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MONTHLY RETROSPECT OF POLITICS.

A CATHOLIC dinner took place on the 7th inst. given (as is expressed in the cards distributed) "to the friends of *toleration*." This appears a strange term to be adopted by the Catholics themselves, thus bestowing on their friends, what they borrow from the vocabulary of their enemies. Toleration! Liberty by sufferance! what is it but persecution affecting to look gracious; disclaiming the will to persecute, but retaining the power. Toleration! why, Dr. Duigenan, Sir R. Musgrave, and Mr. Giffard (the three headed Cerberus of extra-constitutional loyalty,) these kind men will profess themselves to have been always friends of Toleration. These men and such as these, who have no other idea of the constitution, than of a city corporation, of which they might grant a freedom to half a million, and *tolerate* four millions, that is, suffer them to enjoy their civil liberties without a particle of political power to give these liberties security or momentum.

In thus inviting the friends of toleration, the idea, perhaps, was to comprehend the different grades of party, to include the warm, and lukewarm, and to gather around the circumference of one table, all the patriotism, and also, what has been happily called, all the *parrotism* of the country. We have often thought the Catholics were too anxious for unanimity at their meetings, and too careless about preserving it, after their meetings. Indeed the unanimity of large assemblies is generally to be distrusted. It is often nominal and superficial. It is often the effect of influence, timidity, or passive acquiescence, not the unanimity of convinced understanding, not the acclamation of the

heart. Catholics are disposed so to prize, we dare not say idolize, an unity and identity of opinion, in matters of religion, that they are led by natural associations to aim at the same unanimity in political measures. Their numbers, their party views, their personal motives make it impracticable. All indeed conspire in a wish for emancipation. But the Catholic body, like other large bodies of men, beneath a smooth and uniform covering, contains discordant portions, passions, and parties.

An aristocracy of rank rather than talent, respected from habit, and a sort of feudality of attachment, a certain reverential feeling which even those who possess, it feel to be more akin to prejudice than principle—a crumbling influence, proping itself by the buttress of the castle—a democratical portion, of considerable talent, but little experience, of more zeal, than real activity, and subdivided by the play of various motives—a commercial neutrality vibrating, individually, between the two former parties, and a malleable mass which each party wishes to model and shape to its own purposes.

Yet let us acknowledge, and it is with a conscious shame we, Protestants, do it, that in this mass, heterogeneous as it certainly is, endeavouring to work its way and attain its object, sometimes by a strait and erect motion, sometimes by a method more serpentine; one while, by the obsequiousness of its aristocracy, and the humility or humiliation of its hierarchy, at another time, by the ardour and manly erectness of its democracy, as if recollecting how God made man ("Deus fecit hominem rectum" Eccles.)—Yet let us

acknowledge, notwithstanding some hesitation, and slight versatility of conduct, that, in the CATHOLICS OF IRELAND all the public spirit, which remains in this island, seems to have found a refuge. They are the forlorn hope of the country.

The Catholic body ought not to indulge in private or personal resentments. As for Mr. Pole, it would have been enough, in some of their addresses, to have imprisoned him in a contemptuous parenthesis, and left him there, to the gaze of posterity.

Their dinner seems to have been given by the democratic party, and several good speeches were made on the occasion. Too little notice seems to have been taken of that anchor of political salvation in the tempest of these times, an adequate reform in the representation of the people. The Catholics ought, in a manly manner, to embody themselves with this question, nor affect to stand aloof from it, as if fearful of disclosing, by anticipation, such opinions—what opinions? why, such as will alone render them at all, or at any time, *worthy* of being adopted into the fulness of the constitution. The emancipation of the Catholics WITHOUT A REFORM, we will not hesitate to say, would, in no long course of time, only tend to accumulate the mass of political corruption, by a gradual, and perhaps irresistible conformity to the bad habits and evil practices, which are become almost a second national nature, and by that evil communication, which, proverbially, corrupts the best manners, and most correct morals.

“Quod cunque infundes, acescet.”

The chalice of the constitution must first be thoroughly washed and purified, or whatever is *added*, will partake of the pollution. Putrefaction is itself a fermentative process, and the borough-mongering system,

while suffered to remain, is, itself a septic ferment, that will assimilate all the surrounding parts to its own quality. Let it be some comfort to the Catholics, that in their present situation, they form a sounder and healthier part of the political population, than if they were more intimately incorporated with a *morbid* constitution. They would, probably, soon catch the malady, and the supposed blessing, might turn out an added misery to the country.

Indeed we marvel much, that the usual policy of ministry has not by this means, not merely evaded, but annihilated the Catholic importance as an instrument of opposition. Why not first emancipate, and then *assimilate*; first adopt, and then *adulterate*; thus turning, by well-known and efficacious means, the supposed advocates and allies of reform, into an additional check and counteraction, in the day, when every assistance will be wanting. Better than this, will it be, to remain—as you ARE, disappointed but not desponding, not self-abased, not the panders of placeman or pensioner, but in your political incapacities drawing a noble resource from the pride and prerogatives of humanity.* Better we say, to remain *as you are*, than to be handed over among borough proprietors, like so many cattle from one grazier to another, and to gain a shadow of political importance, at the price of your personal honour, and the sacrifice of every feeling either patriotic, moral, or religious. Better than to fall behind either party leader, either Mr. Perceval the pledged antagonist of your claims, or Mr. Ponsou-

* “Place us wherever you may chuse,” said the Spartans, “there we shall endeavour to behave, like brave men.”—Thus, the Catholics seem to have spoken and acted in the present war.

by, that good humoured opposer of the union. Read the late address of the city of Westminster to the Prince Regent as authenticated in the gazette—and be satisfied. The period of Catholic emancipation, and that of parliamentary reform will, and ought to be simultaneous. The national redemption must be complete.

THE PRINCE REGENT notwithstanding he acts cautiously, and with care not to irritate a desperate faction, who have long been in the possession of power, appears to manifest a decided predilection for more liberal politics. The energetic address from the inhabitants of Westminster*, has been published in the Gazette, probably by his command, for it has not been the etiquette to publish petitions, stating grievances in that manner. This address contains a most severe censure on ministers, and they could not be expected to be desirous to publish their own disgrace. Let us admit hopes of a sounder and a more liberal system of governing taking place. Liberality may then become fashionable, and the great herd, who take their tone from the court, and applaud every act of government, may readily re-echo sentiments different from the maxims which have characterized the present reign. In this change, the sycophants of power can readily join, as they are not incommoded by any fixed principle, but can

“Change shapes with Proteus for advantages,

And frame their faces to all occasions.”

The Common Council of the city of London, have voted the freedom of the city to be presented to the Regent, in a box of heart of oak, but the court lawyers have discovered, that in his present elevated station, as Regent, he cannot accept of the freedom of any corporation.

In another page will be found an address to the Regent, and a petition to the house of Commons, from the inhabitants of Paisley. Such statements of distress are the best comments on the war, and on the fatal measures which have been pursued. They are strong manifestoes against the measures pursued by government.

The long debates on the subject of the report of the bullion committee of last session, have, as might have been expected, terminated in negating the resolutions founded on this report, which were ably introduced in a clear comprehensive speech by Francis Horner, chairman of the Bullion Committee. But majorities may decide the fate of resolutions, but they cannot control the strong current of events. To the attentive observer, this debate has afforded much matter for reflection, and given some alarming views of our situation. Ministers suffered some matters to escape, which, to the reflecting, show the dangers of the crisis. They all, with the exception of the noted John Fuller, admit that the depreciation of the bank-paper is an acknowledged evil, although in making this important concession, they quibble about the terms.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, and George Rose, are not sufficiently audacious actually to deny the existence of the evil, but they say the present war-system cannot be supported while a foreign expenditure of 24 millions is annually required, if the banks are forced to curtail their issues by a removal of the restriction to pay in cash. True! but why madly continue a system, which has already produced such a state of distress; and which, if persisted in, is rapidly hurrying on to inevitable ruin? Even Mr. Vansittart, the mover of the opposite set of resolu-

* See 242 page of this volume.

tions, admits of the danger of a paper-currency, not founded on specie, if for no other reason, because it is likely to be affected by the fluctuations of public opinion. He candidly admits, that however desirable a return to cash-payments may be, the measure is impracticable, and that a remedy cannot be found, if the present system is continued. When such are the concessions of the friends of the present measures, it may be clearly seen on what insecure grounds our system of factitious credit stands. It is a most alarming crisis, in which "we go backward, and fall; or forward, and mar all!"

Henry Thornton points out the danger of parliament blindly rushing on, and averting their eyes from a view of the precipices. When risque is to be encountered, it should be met with prospective and deliberative care. The following extract from his speech, affords remarks worthy of attention, and conveys a salutary caution:

"In consequence of an over issue of its notes on account of Government, by the bank of Paris in 1803, there was a run upon it from the country for specie. The bank was embarrassed, and stopt payment. They applied to the French Government; a commission was appointed to examine the matter; who suggested, that the Government should never borrow of the bank in future, because their request was equal to a command, and that they should only issue their notes on short securities. The Paris bank, to remedy its embarrassments, diminished the circulation of its notes, and in the course of three months returned to its payments in specie. The merchants and manufacturers in Paris suffered for a time from a limitation of the discounts, but it was thought better to suffer this evil,

than to encounter the still greater evils of a depreciated circulation."

Mr. Sharpe, another of the committee, adduces the example of Hamburgh, Holland, and Paris, which although highly taxed, and the two former subject to French extortion, are nevertheless able to maintain their ground, *because they have not recourse to a paper currency*. But Great Britain has gone on so far, as to be unable to recede. Even Wm. Wilberforce, who certainly does not rank as an alarmist, or an opposer of the war system, compares our present state, to that high florid appearance of good health, which often immediately precedes the fatal stroke of an apoplexy.

Sir Francis Burdett, in a manly clear manner, not being afraid to meet the difficulties of the case, and not willing to slur them over to answer the exigency of the present moment, expresses, in the conclusion of his speech, the following energetic sentiments:

"He feared that the system must be permitted to take its course. The inscription on the gate of Dante's Hell, might be applied to it—"You who enter here, leave all hope of returning behind." He saw no reason to believe that the bank would ever be able to recover itself. The Hon. Baronet then adverted to the price of bread as a poof of the depreciation of the currency. The average price of the quartern loaf for 40 years previous to the restriction, was 7½d.; the average price for the subsequent 14 years was 1s. 0½d. With regard to the remedy, he contended, that on the recovery of the currency, it was hardly possible to conceive that the country should be able to pay in sound coin the pensions, salaries, besides the army and navy expenditure, together with the interest of the debt, created with a view to the state of deprecia-

tion. Considering the rate at which we were proceeding, the interest of the debt would probably, at no very distant period, amount to 50 or 60 millions. How could the people pay this in sound currency? But then it might be said, "what remedy have you?" That was a hard question. He could not save a dying man. But he must blame those who produced the disease, and carried on the delusion, which began with the funding system, and would ultimately prove its destruction. He thought, however, something should be done for the security of funded property, which would be ruined. The country had derived no benefit from this measure of restriction. The bank had derived great profits from it. It had forfeited its commercial character, by becoming a tool of the minister of the day; and as in the South Sea scheme, he thought the estates of the directors ought to be made liable to the losses sustained by the public creditor in consequence of the restriction. That being his opinion, he would not shrink from declaring it."

After a perusal of those prolix, puzzled debates, protracted for so many nights, upon the undervalued currency, we are inclined to exclaim, and *is this all* that we had to expect from the assembled wisdom and foresight of so many professional politicians? Just to let things remain as they are, and the deterioration of the circulating medium to proceed, as it is like to do. As for the truth of this depreciation, one is surprised at the puzzle and perplexity it occasioned. It must always be so when *axioms* are brought under discussion. Our heads will soon grow bewildered, when we are called to argue on the first principles of the understanding, or the evidence of the senses. "Father," said Jack,

just from college, "this fowl on the dish is one fowl, and that there fowl, makes two fowls; now as we know from mathematics, that two and one make three, I conclude, by logic, that we have three fowls for our dinner." "Well reasoned, my lad," said the farmer, "so I shall help thy mother to one fowl, I shall take the second to myself, and you shall have the third for your ingenuity." And thus the common sense of the community is attempted to be imposed upon, into a belief that the multiplication of paper is a sign of the increase of national wealth, when in reality its depreciation is an exact exponent of the *excess*, circulated beyond the internal uses of the country.

"The wealth of a country," as has been well said, "consists in the number of her industrious people, in the wisdom of her laws, in the impartiality of their administration, in the security of her liberties, in the *buoyant vigour of her public spirit*, and the unfaded splendour of her national character." This is the true and sterling wealth of a country. Gold and silver is adjudged by the common consent of mankind to be the representative of that wealth, through all countries. It is in universal acceptance; and *credit*, which may, to a certain extent, be turned into a merchantable commodity, differs from *cash*, inasmuch as it is liable to the various fluctuations of private and public opinion.

When paper, which is the representation of credit, is poured into circulation, without an exchangeability for cash, (which is its natural restriction), we have then no criterion on which to rest opinion, a frail and fragile thing at best, and which requires every support. Our rule and measure of *real value* is lost, and cast away, into the rising and falling wave of opinion. Opinion

may be kept up for a time at home, but what will it pass for on the hostile continent? It is the momentum of metallic currency alone, which weighs down one scale in the balance of external trade, and makes the scale, filled with paper, kick the beam. The gold, whose place has been supplied by paper, has been, in reality, sold and squandered for the purposes of war, as if a private gentleman had sold his plate to defray his debts at play, and substituted pewter for all domestic uses. One party may say he gains, to the exact amount of the plate he has disposed of, for which he must have gotten a value. The other party answers, What value? Is it not all spent? Is not your side-board, and its gorgeous covering, evaporated and gone? What will your pewter pass for abroad? Or how, as affairs go on, will you support a continental war, which must continue to drain out so many millions annually?

It now appears as if the war on the peninsula were *purposely* protracted on the part of the enemy, and that his *invasion* of Britain is really upon her finances, and principally in the immense military expenditure, which, of itself, is fully sufficient to cast the balance of payments so much against us. The nation is thus *manauvered* out of millions. The different causes assigned by ministry and opposition, all converge into one—the war. The unfavourable rate of exchange, the large import, the restrained export, the high freightage, the rash speculations, the intercommunication of the bank with ministry, the quantity of paper issued, and its consequent depreciation, all resolve into the war as the radical source of these evils, however each party, that of opposition as well as of administration, may wish, and endeavour, in their speeches, in fa-

shionable phrase, to *blink* the question. “All, without exception,” said Mr Percival, “are agreed upon the *necessity* of carrying on the war.”

But is this a necessity of *things*, absolute and uncontrollable by human power, or is it a necessity pronounced by a little, short-sighted, self-opinionated mortal, a necessity of parliamentary *opinion*, a necessity similar to that which has been held forth in every war from the earliest period of history; in fact an occasional necessity which vanishes before a still stronger necessity. Will posterity look upon this necessity with the same eyes of these enraged parties? Will it not be astonished at the flush of intoxication which has succeeded the negative success of the war in Portugal, and still more at the implicit, premature, we hope not presumptuous confidence acknowledged to be placed by a whole cabinet, in a single man, as to the plan and management of this war, on which turns the pivot of the public safety.

Well, if Sancho were to ask, for what purpose all this fighting, this squandering of purse and this waste of human happiness, we think even Don Quixote would have been puzzled with the question. Is it for extinction of jacobinism? why, surely Bonaparte has well performed this service, and for doing so, you ought to be obliged to him. Is it to restore the ancient order of things in France? Why Bonaparte has accomplished this, and with much supplementary despotism, and for this, surely *you* ought to thank him rather than go to war with him. Is it for the deliverance of Europe? Even Don Quixote must shake his head at that, until Europe, and even the Peninsula will assent to be delivered. Is it for indemnity of the past? Why the longer the war continues,

and the greater the expenditure, the more impracticable will prove such an indemnification. Or security for the future? Are you to ask Bonaparte for that security? No, shame upon them who could ask it. That security rests, and only rests with yourselves, in your own right hands, and in your courageous hearts, resolved to defend your homes to the last drop of blood, and to drive the invader into the ocean. Is it to secure the monopoly of European commerce? Certainly this end has been ill attained, and the mercantile interest have reason to curse the hour that they placed such credit in these visionary speculations. Is it then to gratify our personal animosity against "a Tyrant," "a Monster," "a Corsican," and all the rest of that abusive vocabulary, which the magnanimous minister of a great nation thinks fit, in the assembled senate, to bestow on the ruler of the French people. Is this a legitimate motive for a continuance of war? No, would Don Quixote indignantly answer, by the law of chivalry, and by the honour of a gentleman, no true knight nor even squire would condescend to such abuse, or give countenance to those who thus degraded the character and manners of a generous country. Is it, in fine, the *disagreeable* predicament of saying—I wish for, and I want PEACE. Why, Bonaparte has said this more than once, in the flush of victory, and will you scruple to do so, at the only time in which a noble minded nation would second you, when you stand upon equal terms with the enemy, or do you defer the declaration to the possible period of defeat and discomfiture, when indeed the necessity would be hard and intolerable? Our political belief is a very summary one. What is the cause of our present public distress? The War. What would effectuate a cure? Peace. How obtain peace? By a

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change of ministers, and measures, and by a magnanimous declaration that we wish for and we want a peace on a just and honourable basis.—But Mr. Perceval has got his war loan of 20 millions, and the war minister expects disatches from his brother the commander in chief.

Among the documents much interest will be found in the proceedings of some meetings held in London by the Protestant dissenters who have justly taken alarm at a bill brought into the house of lords, by Lord Sidmouth, to alter the toleration act, the tendency of which under the appearance of making regulations to render the licensing of dissenting teachers more difficult, appears to be to nibble away the inalienable rights of conscience. Lord Sidmouth may be a man meaning well, but weak men of this character, with an itch for meddling, often do much mischief. It is evident from the tenor of his speech, on introducing the bill, that his attachment to the church of England, probably as thinking it the best prop to the state, leads him to look with jealousy and suspicion on all sects differing from it. Church and state, or as they sometimes more grossly term it, Church and King, is a favourite maxim with a large party in England, who are as inimical as the temper of the times will permit to liberty of conscience, and who lie on the watch for any plausible opportunity to abridge it. The real motives of this party are founded in political intolerance, and a selfish exclusion, covered under a mask of dislike to those they call sectaries on account of their religious opinions. But a desire to possess political power, not a zeal for religion, is their actuating principle.

The disgraceful persecution of Dr. Priestley at Birmingham stands on record as a sample of the madness rea-

dy to be infused into the mob, if a fit occasion presented.

Instigators, and incendiaries of high note are not wanting. Yet we would not include Lord Sidmouth altogether in this class. He probably would not intentionally do wrong. But history points out a strong similarity between the doctrines of high churchism and arbitrary power. The demon of bigotry is only sleeping in his dark den, it would be dangerous ever so little to slacken his fetters. The high prerogative party are hostile alike to Dissenters and Catholics.

We have no objection to see the dissenting clergy roused to defend their rights. We never contemplated their alliance with power, with satisfaction. We think they would be much better employed in instilling into their flocks, the spirit of virtuous independence, and in asserting the rights of liberty of conscience, than in joining in a sort of alliance as step sisters to the establishment, cajoled into good humour, by artifice and a show of kindness, while they are secretly mistrusted. The *Regium Donum* is a sop to Cerberus. It may be justly considered as the opprobrium of the dissenting church.

We would gladly see "the *booing*" at the levee of the minister, or to the Lord Lieutenant's secretary, and the presenting of fulsome adulatory addresses, exchanged for the unbending integrity of men daring to assert the principles of civil and religious liberty.

The Dissenters in England were roused, and showed themselves capable of vigorous exertion, very different from that state of apathy, into which Ireland is sunk. Eight hundred petitions were presented to the house of Lords, against Lord Sidmouth's bill, and in this number was one from some members of the

church of England, among whom were several clergymen. The bill has been thrown out, and the spirit of tolerance has, in this instance, had a complete triumph. The Archbishop of Canterbury spoke in favour of liberty of conscience, and gave up the business with tolerable grace. We have in the petition from the members of the church of England, just alluded to, another proof, that the low party in the church of England contains many men of genuine moderation. It is pleasing to contrast the Tillotsons and Hoadlys, and a host of the low party, with the advocates of bigotry in religion, and of arbitrary power in politics, who have occasionally appeared nominally under the external banners of the same church. To render to all the due meed of praise, or the censure of demerit, is the duty of the historian, or the more humble recorder of the passing events of the day, to whom impartiality is an impressive obligation. "Well pleased to praise, but not afraid to blame."

On the subject of religious freedom whether regarding Catholics or Dissenters, there is one measure of justice. Toleration is not a term sufficiently expressive. To tolerate implies the granting of a boon, and as if there existed a previous right to grant or withhold. Let us say with Mirabeau, "the communion of every man with the Most High is independent of all political institution. Between God and the heart of man what government dares to interfere."

It is said a meeting has been held in London, to invite the delegates from the Irish Catholics, to a public dinner on the 7th of next month. We hail the auspicious omen! more especially as the Earl of Moira, the friend of the Prince, it is said, will

preside on the occasion. A victory over prejudice, by holding out the cup of hope to a people, whose claims are founded in justice, will do more to tranquillize the empire, and add essentially to its strength, than ten victories gained in the peninsula.

It is curious to observe the versatility of statesmen. The Irish brewers, in a contention with the distillers, who shall have the greatest share in making the Irish drunk, have petitioned parliament to raise the duty on whiskey. Henry Grattan, and some others of the Irish popular members, appear to have recovered their senses, and now speak against the measure of the low duty on spirits adopted last session. Let it be remembered, however, that last year, regardless of the injury to morals, they supported the measure from a selfish regard to the landed interest, and it was matter of regret to behold men who some years ago had laboured to remove temptations to intoxication out of the way of the people, then join in an arrangement likely to produce a contrary effect. The consequences, as were foreseen, have been distressing. Drunkenness has been increased in Ireland in a very great degree; so also has disease, the almost constant attendant of intoxication. It appears that in last year the number of admissions of patients into hospitals has been doubled, and the deaths in them trebled. For all this suffering, how poor is the compensation! But even in this plan, the landed proprietors were outwitted by the schemes of our Irish financier. He represented that lowering the duty on spirits, would aid the landed interest, by securing a better market for grain. They became dupes, and acquiesced in laying on the 50 per cent. additional window tax to make up the deficiency in the revenue. Such a plan appeared plau-

sible to the landed proprietors to throw some of the burden more off their immediate concerns, on the community at large. But mark the progress of deception and cullibility. Our Irish minister will probably graciously condescend to allow the duty on spirits to be raised, but the additional tax on windows, notwithstanding, remains.

The revolution in Spanish America, including Mexico and the Spanish settlements in North America, as well as at Buenos Ayres and other places in South America, appears to be making progress. Although the accounts are generally obscure and contradictory, yet sufficient is known to lead to the expectation that the cause of the natives will finally triumph over those, who born in Spain, and going over to rule the settlements in America as provinces, had become the monopolizers of power, and often in the arrogance of office had abused their delegated authority as the corrupt representatives, of a corrupt and feeble government at home, such as was administered by Charles IV. and his infamous minister Godoy, and at present by the bodies which have from time to time ruled Spain, under the fiction of Ferdinand VII.

Amid the distractions of Europe, and although scarcely at present noticed, in the superior interest attached to concerns nearer home, this revolution may probably at no distant period produce important events on the future course of empire, and tend to enlarge the sphere of human felicity. To contemplate the continent of America emancipated from European influence affords a grand subject for contemplation.

Massena's retreat has inspired such unbounded confidence, that intoxicated by the sudden reverse, many are carried away with the general current, and form high expectations

of a continuance of success. If a temporary success encourage extravagant hopes, and diminish that small portion of sober-mindedness which remained with us, the imagined victory may lead to future defeat, and incapacitate us from being prepared to bear with fortitude a reverse. Massena in the different skirmishing parties, appears not to have sustained any material defeat. From a want of provisions, he retreated, but in good order. The timid fancy they see security in those temporary advantages, and those who "through fear die a thousand deaths," flatter themselves that their security is increased by war being kept up at a distance from them, but this hope may be delusive. By the campaigns in Spain and Portugal, we may calculate on the good effect of blood and slaughter at a distance, and coldly contemplate the destruction of other countries; while our dear speck of earth is safe, and our selfish interests are supposed to be promoted by the sufferings of others, and by the war being kept at a distance. Fighting on the continent may train soldiers to greater expertness, and more skill in the military art, but the multitudes, to use Windham's unfeeling phrase, *killed off* in these unprofitable continental expeditions "will not rise to fight again," when the great contest for national existence, and for independence may as most likely it will eventually, be on our own shores. To speak merely on the principles of cold calculating policy, the British empire with its comparatively small population of 15 millions, when opposed to the great population of France and its dependent tributary nations, should be economical of human sinews, and not be lavishly prodigal of those resources, on which the country may have ultimately to depend in its

last exigency. Foreign expeditions are rapidly exhausting the financial strength of Britain. Look back at the past, and awfully anticipate the future!

From a calm contemplation of all these circumstances some have formed a decided judgment, that continental expeditions, including the exertions in Spain and Portugal, instead of strengthening for the future contest, have materially wasted the resources of Great Britain, and are likely to hasten the dreaded catastrophe. In this view the confidence of fancied security from a small alteration in the appearance of things in the peninsula may increase the danger, by blinding the people to their best interests, and disposing them to yield an easy credit to the plausible arts, by which the war-faction may seek to retain or extend an influence over public opinion.

Another great victory over Massena is announced, whether it will turn out, as other victories pompously proclaimed, as at Vimeira and Talavera, can only be known by subsequent events. If the most favourable terms of retreat are allowed by convention to the defeated army, or if there is a necessity to abandon the sick in the hospitals, men of plain sense, free from the mania of implicit belief, will pronounce such a victory to be a defeat in disguise, or to have all the effects of a real defeat. Much trick is used by the stimulus of false and exaggerated news, variously fabricated, to keep up an attachment to war in the people. Scheme after scheme has been defeated, expeditions have been totally unsuccessful, or if partial victories have been achieved, they have been attended with immense waste of human life, and an immoderate expense of money, but the results, after all the boastings, have

not been beneficial, and no brighter prospects open to a burdened people, who yet suffer themselves to be misled, by their credulity, their fears, and their avarice. For while the nation is sinking, and the public good little attended to, many are making private gains in one way or another, from the continuance of the war. Hence the ever repeated fallacy of magnifying trifling advantages, and glossing over defeats and mismanagements; and the ready belief given to such soothing delusions. This disposition may assume, the false name of patriotism, but sordid self interest will be found its basis.

Rumours of a rupture between Russia and France are kept afloat, and hints are thrown out of the co-operation of a British fleet in the Baltic, in certain previously concerted plans. If these are not idle rumours to gratify the insatiable desire for news, and to keep up systematically the popular delusion and fondness for war, we may have once more to lament the fatal propensity of restless, ambitious, but weak statesmen to stir up fresh broils as impotent as their former schemes; and to read the defeat of another continental coalition in the sufferings and miseries of the dupes to such injudicious politics, and in the further aggrandizement of that power for the overthrow of which such impotent and rash plans are unwisely concerted, and bunglingly executed. Coalitions of nations with separate interests, contain the seeds of their speedy dissolution.

Sweden without feeling much interest in a change of rulers, is likely, at least for the present, to continue quietly under the Lieutenant of Bonaparte, and to permit Bernadotte to exercise the powers of royalty, now as Crown Prince,

and hereafter as king. Denmark will probably be long kept in opposition to British interests, by the recollection of bitter injuries, and poor Prussia, too feeble to move, must reap the fruits of her rash and imbecile councils, in joining a fatal and ill-planned coalition. Russia intent on spoiling Turkey, is not likely to be diverted from her subserviency to France, as the price of being permitted to receive such a part of the plunder, as the haughty Napoleon may condescend to allow to a power confessedly so feeble as Russia, the brute force of whose widely scattered population, sunk in barbarism, and possessing only the lowest grade in civilization, is unable to cope with the more polished nations of Europe. Opposed to Turkey, as still more feeble, and degraded by want of intellectual cultivation, she may possess relative power, but in conflicts with Europeans, her capabilities are extremely small. From this view of the Baltic powers, little co-operation can be looked for by England.

Matters appear to be gradually verging to hostilities with the United States of North America. As the hostile orders in council, to prohibit commercial intercourse by American vessels bringing their produce to these countries, expected as a measure of retaliation, has been hitherto delayed, it will probably not take place, till the result of the new Envoy's mission to America is known, but without a change of system on the part of our rulers, war is considered by some as inevitable.

In the mean time a mode of retaliation is adopted, which, it may be feared, will throw an additional obstacle in the way of an amicable settlement. Higher duties are proposed to be laid on American produce brought in American vessels: in Britain on timber, cotton-wool, and pot

and pearlshes—in Ireland on the two former, and on tobacco. Besides these, and an additional duty on hemp, we are to have no fresh taxes in this country. The one on tobacco will be severely felt by the poor. Ireland has borrowed $7\frac{1}{2}$ millions, but England becomes security for $4\frac{1}{2}$, and for this boon great credit is taken for liberality, while the fact really is that from the failure in the duties on the imports of last year, and the unproductiveness of the new taxes, this country manifests that it is incapable of bearing additional taxation at present, or that new taxes could be laid on with any prospect of increasing the revenue. The duty on cotton-wool will be severely felt both in Great Britain and Ireland, in the present depressed state of the cotton manufacture*. But it is a continuation of the unwise policy, which produced the orders in council. In the eagerness to annoy neutrals, great injury may be done to our manufacturing interests.

The Duke of York has been restored to the office of Commander in Chief. It is to be regretted that the Prince Regent has contravened that popular sentiment which occasioned the Duke formerly to resign after the investigation of his conduct in parliament. But such often is the effect of the intrigues of courts, and of the compromises for gaining support. How often is honour thus bartered!

* We hear the duty on cotton-wool is abandoned.

The following subscription has been received since our last for PETER FINNERTY.
Richard Talbot.....10s.

DOCUMENTS.

SMITH, MAYOR.

A Common Council, holden in the Chamber of Guildhall of the city of London, on Thursday the 2d, Day of May, 1811.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY,

That the freedom of this city be present-

ed to his Royal Highness the Prince Regent, in testimony of the deep and grateful sense entertained by this court of his public virtues, and amiable and endearing qualities; of the purity of his constitutional principles, exemplified by his unvaried attachment to the rights and liberties of the people; of his exalted forbearance and moderation during the whole of his Royal Father's afflicting indisposition; and of his rare self-denial in refusing to increase the national expenditure, by any temporary addition to his state and dignity as Prince Regent; thus practically illustrating the union which must ever exist between the feelings of a great and patriot Prince, and the happiness of a free and loyal people.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY, That his Royal Highness be requested to honour this city by his acceptance of the said freedom.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY, That the copy of the said freedom be presented to his Royal Highness in a box of British Heart of Oak.

WOODTHORPE.

PARLIAMENTARY REFORM.

Declaration of the Livery of London, May 3d, 1811, at the public Dinner.

"That towards the close of the unjust and calamitous war with our fellow-subjects in America, it was declared by the Livery of London in common hall. 'That our excellent constitution appeared in no circumstances more grievously defaced, than in the unequal representation of the people in parliament, which continual experience had proved to be no less productive of calamities to this country, than predatory to the rights of Englishmen.'

"That about the same period similar declarations were made by numerous public meetings throughout the country as well as by the most disinterested and enlightened statesmen of the time, who predicted a continuance and an increase of national grievances and calamities, unless a speedy reformation were effected in the representation of the people in parliament.

"That since that period, the same hateful system has been pursued—the same pernicious influence exercised and widely extended—frequent and daring violations of the law and constitution committed—the best blood and treasure of the nation profusely wasted—the public burdens enormously increased—a depreciated paper currency established, which has